2003

Was Socrates an Andragogue or a Pedagogue?

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Was Socrates an Andragogue or a Pedagogue? Exploring the Educational Implications of the Philosophy for Children Movement

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Abstract

The educational implications of Lipman's Philosophy for Children (PFC) programmes are examined against the background of key concepts and themes: pedagogy, andragogy, curriculum objectives and content. PFC strategies are closer to andragogy than pedagogy, and more open-ended, wide-ranging and democratic than the traditional Socratic paradigm. Such progarmmes have much educational value – in teaching about virtue, work, imagination and the human condition in general – though the claims about fostering general, transferable reasoning and thinking skills are probably far too ambitious. PFC and similar curriculum programmes are of inestimable benefit and value to learners of all ages, particularly in these destitute times when education has become synonymous with skills training and preparation for employment.

Background: Philosophy, Andragogy and Pedagogy

> We know that a major part of philosophical reflection since Protagoras and Plato, since Pythagoras, has revolved around the word *training* (*Bildung*), and thus around pedagogy and *reform*. The assumption is that the mind is not given to men (sic) as it should be and has to be re-formed. Childhood is the monster of philosophers. It's also their accomplice. Childhood tells them that the mind is not given. But that it is possible (Lyotard,1992,p.115; original italics).

Can childhood really be the 'monster of philosophers'? Well, clearly not of *all* philosophers and especially not of Matthew Lipman - the founder of the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (IAPC) at Montclair State College in the USA in 1974 (IAPC,1987) - and his many supporters around the world (Whalley,1987; Hyland,1989; Nicol,1990).

Lyotard's (characteristically and intentionally) provocative statement, however, does tend to highlight all the key educationally interesting issues surrounding the Philosophy for Children (PFC) movement which has been popularised by Lipman over the last twenty years. Is it possible to teach philosophy to children in any meaningful, non-trivial sense? What theory of learning/teaching and model of the mind is implied by PFC? Is work in this sphere education or training, pedagogy or andragogy and, on a more practical level, is it possible to explain and justify PFC against the background of the relentless 'vocationalising' of the whole curriculum which has characterised global educational developments over the last few decades (Hyland,1999; Winch,2000).

Lyotard certainly seems to be correct about the conception of childhood and theory of learning which was implied by classical philosophy. Although the concept of liberal education is, as Schofield (1972) notes, rooted in the notion of freeing the mind from error - graphically illustrated in Plato's allegory of the Cave - teaching on this account is still authoritarian in the sense that it 'involves the initiation of others into worth-while activities' (Peters,1966,p.144). Plato has been regarded by some educators as heralding the progressive tradition in suggesting that 'one of the chief aims of education is to turn the soul in the right direction and save it from self-deceit and delusion' (Curtis & Boultwood,1970,p.12).

However, all this needs to be placed within the framework of a process whereby a teacher (on the inside of forms of knowledge) seeks to introduce others (learners) to forms of thinking of which they have little or no experience. Although, along with Scheffler (1964,p.71) - who describes the theory of teaching derived from Plato and St Augustine as an 'insight' model' - we may agree that this does seem to involve implanting 'vision' in learners as opposed to the transmission of bodies of facts which is implied in Locke's *tabula rasa* philosophy of mind - the process is still essentially paternalistic and authoritarian in that learners are entirely subject to the control and direction of teachers. Indeed, as Castle (1967) reminds us, the Ancient Greek

paidagogos was 'held in low esteem' and 'public opinion assumed that instruction went hand in hand with chastisement' which was 'severe and often brutal' (p.66).

Socrates' method of mental midwifery may also be interpreted in terms of the attempt to offer vision to learners but - in spite of the superficially democratic appearance of Socratic questioning - the dialogue between Socrates and his interlocutors is closely controlled and directed by the teacher (who possesses knowledge) in the interests of the student (who stands in need of such knowledge). Certainly, as Castle notes, there does some to be a subtle change of emphasis from the Platonic conception of *paideia* which in the *Republic* and *Laws* meant the 'preparation of young people for adult life', to the later works in which Socrates suggests that education is 'the search, throughout a lifetime, for knowledge of the good' (ibid.,pp.103-4). The nature and form of the good are, however, given and not open to interpretation by learners; what Nettleship (1969) called the 'ascent to truth' (pp.94ff) is the journey down a road designed, constructed and guided by teachers who are themselves in possession of a knowledge of the good.

Socratic method, therefore, seems to have more affinities with pedagogy than andragogy which is ironic given that - when the German teacher Andrew Knapp first used the term 'andragogy' in 1833 - he was thinking mainly of Plato's educational philosophy (Nottingham Andragogy Group, 1983). Brookfield (1984) traces the modern history of the concept to the work of Eduard Lindeman in America in the 1920s, though there is little doubt that the chief populariser of andragogy in contemporary adult education discourse is Malcolm Knowles (1970). Davenport (1987) offers a succinct account of how Knowles came to resurrect and re-define the nature of the key term. He explains that, according to Knowles, pedagogy:

> is derived from the Greek words *paid* (meaning 'child') and *agogos* (meaning 'leader of'); consequently pedagogy literally means 'the art and science of teaching children. Knowles then makes a curious semantical leap when he defines andragogy. *Aner* (meaning 'man' or 'adult') and *agogos* (meaning 'leader of') would seemingly be translated as 'the art and science of teaching men or adults'. However, Knowles apparently wants to emphasize the differences between the education of children and adults so he interprets andragogy as 'the art and science of helping adults learn' (p.110).

Thus, on this account, andragogy - in stressing the primacy of learning over teaching, and moving from didacticism to facilitation in the educational process - is clearly aligned with the progressive, student-centred tradition in educational theory pioneered by Rousseau, Herbart and Dewey (Entwistle,1970). Moreover, in expanding this tradition to incorporate activities specifically designed for adult students, andragogical theory foregrounds the importance of building on the life experience of learners and - as expounded in Dewey's pragmatic philosophy (Dewey,1963) - orienting learning towards problems and topics rather than the nature of particular disciplines. Like Dewey, Lipman (1988) is concerned ultimately with radical educational reform - with a 'thoroughgoing reappraisal of education' (p.17) - and he thinks that introducing philosophy into the schools is a way of bringing about such reform.

Philosophy for Children: An Overview

The Lipman programme is founded on the notion that - if we strip the 'formidable terminology' from traditional philosophy - then what remains is a:

> wealth of ideas (which can be rephrased in children's own words) and the discipline of logic. Present the philosophy in the form of children's novels, and encourage classroom discussions of the ideas. Now what happens?
> (IAPC,1987,p.4)

The answer which PFC proponents give is that philosophy becomes a genuine elementary school subject incorporating a vast range of educational benefits including - apart from the intrinsic value of introducing youngsters to important philosophical ideas and concepts - such extrinsic advantages as improving thinking and discussion skills, enhancing moral development and fostering general reflection and intellectual development.

Through specially designed narratives - described as 'philosophical novels' (Murris,1994,p.80) - the key idea of the programme is to get children 'thinking aloud with others' (Morehouse,1993,p.10). Existing children's literature was thought unsuitable by Lipman and his co-workers since this tended to 'pre-empt the child's imagination (1980,p.35). PFC materials use stories appropriate to the ability and level of students (e.g. 'Pixie' for junior, 'Harry Stottlemeier'

for middle school, and 'Suki' for secondary pupils; IAPC,1987,pp.8-11), and which are all 'about school children and the experiences they have' (Nicol,1990,p.179). Each set of materials is accompanied by teachers' manuals which recommend organisational procedures and triggers for philosophical discussion.

The programme is underpinned by an assumption about children's curiosity and their innate impulse to ask 'philosophical' questions such as 'What is time?' and 'What's a mind?' (Whalley,1987,p.264), and the belief that - since these are often dismissed by parents, teachers and elders - the philosophically creative impulse is often stifled at an early age. The teacher's role is said to be that of facilitator who responds to the children's reactions to and discussions about the questions and issues raised in the PFC stories. As Nicol (1990) puts it:

> The students must be made to feel intellectually safe and given a sense of their own right to contribute to the learning process in which they are taking part. The teacher must then exercise personal and interpersonal skills in ensuring such an environment exists and that no individual is excluded because they feel inadequate to meet the demands of the lesson (p.180).

It could be claimed that such a learning environment is an ideal prerequisite of *any* sort of meaningful learning. However, in the Lipman programme the process - stimulating discussion and fostering a community of enquiry - becomes an end in itself which complements the other ends of enhancing systematic thinking skills and fostering philosophical interests.

In addition to the intrinsic ends of introducing students to the world of philosophy, a number of important extrinsic general educational goals are claimed to be achieved through the programme. Large-scale experiments conducted by the Educational Testing Service in Newark, N.J. reported significant gains in mathematics and reasoning for children who had followed a PFC programme as against those not exposed, in addition to gains in reading level by such pupils (IAPC,1987,p.4). Whalley (1987,p.279) summarises the case for introducing the Lipman approach into UK education as follows:

- It would allow pupils to learn reasoning in its natural home - dialogue and enquiry

- It would give children the opportunity to discuss important issues not covered in the mainstream curriculum
- It would foster in youngsters the idea that there are serious problems and issues which are not susceptible to pat or glib resolution
- It would give children an idea of what can be achieved through the collaboration of minds and co-operative enquiry
- It would give pupils confidence in their ability to think for themselves
- It would provide an antidote to the fragmentation of the curriculum by dealing with issues that are fundamental to learning of all kinds and providing - what Young (1999) calls the 'connectivity' between forms of knowledge and learning - which is essential to the progresssion and continuity of learning throughout life

Can Children Do Philosophy?

A common objection to the PFC and similar programmes is that, as Whalley (1987,p.261) put it, 'philosophy is much too difficult for children', particularly in the early years. This invites the obvious response that - if philosophy is presented in the way it is generally pursued in higher education - then, obviously, mathematics, history, science and many other subjects are also much too difficult for children. Indeed, it is the esoteric nature of philosophy which - particularly in Britain where it was restricted to universities until school curricula were introduced in the 1980s (Butler, 1984) - has produced a distorted view of the subject as being a difficult, high-level study suited only for the initiated few. Paradoxically, it is this same slightly arcane and mysterious conception which has helped to sustain the widespread popularity of philosophy as a (non-vocational, non-examination) subject offered in adult education centres for the last fifty years or so (Hyland, 1984).

In response to the objection that PFC is not 'proper' philosophy since it is not based on a thorough knowledge of great philosophers like Descartes, Kant and Russell, Whalley replies that - on this restricted 'ivory tower' account - Socrates and his interlocutors could not have been doing real philosophy either since 'they, too, did not have the good fortune to be acquainted with these illustrious names' (1987,p.262). A related concern is that, for young children unable to distinguish between nuances of knowledge and belief, there is a danger that they may be indoctrinated into certain belief systems. Apart from the fact that 'indoctrination' of this kind is

overtly present in many curriculum subjects (especially connected with religion; cf. Hirst,1974), it is worth pointing out that philosophising in general - and the Lipman project in particular- is based on a non-directive, facilitating rather than a didactic role for the teacher. As Murris (1994) has observed, the 'community of enquiry' strategy which is central to the PFC project:

> assumes a meeting of minds, where pupils aided by a facilitator, among other things: clarify and justify their beliefs, make connections, generalize, give examples and counter-examples, look for assumptions and speculate (p.80).

The teaching role implied here - similar to that of the neutral teacher in the Humanities Curriculum Project popularised in Britain in the 1970s (Schools Council,1970) - is designed precisely to counter indoctrination and promote open-ended enquiry.

Moreover, mainstream educational theory - from the progressive child-centred tradition to contemporary lifelong learning discourse - seems to lend support to the claims made for PFC. The curriculum theorist, Jerome Bruner (1974), is perhaps the most powerful advocate of opening up the school curriculum to the complete range of a society's culture, traditions and collective values and experience. In a famous passage he argues that:

> for any knowledge and empowering skill that exists in the culture there is a corresponding form that is within the grasp of the young learner at the stage of development where one finds him (sic) - that any subject can be taught to anybody at any age in some form that is both interesting and honest. Once mastered in that appropriate form, the learner can go on to more powerful, more precise forms of knowing and of using knowledge (p.32).

This model of development provides the foundation for the so-called 'spiral curriculum' (Bruner,1966) whereby basic concepts and elements of all the disciplines are introduced in the early years of schooling then re-visited and explored in greater depth at later stages. On this account, philosophy deserves its place in the curriculum as much as any of the other 'forms of knowledge' that have evolved over the years (Hirst,1965). Moreover, as Nicol's (1990) research on the introduction of the Lipman programme in an English comprehensive school demonstrated, younger pupils tend to get much more from the philosophical novels than older ones.

Philosophy and Thinking Skills

In addition to the epistemological justification for including philosophy in school curricula, the PFC movement has from the outset drawn also on the 'thinking skills' developments of recent years. Philosophical initiatives were introduced into the secondary school curriculum in Britain through the creation of A-level courses and also under the banner of 'thinking skills' and 'problem-solving' programmes (Fisher,1987). At primary school level, there were similar trends which were justified in terms of fostering 'transferable skills' conducive to 'flexible thinking for a technological age' (Greenberg,1987,p.18). Although, philosophy never did become firmly established as a curriculum subject - due largely due to the introduction of a prescriptive national curriculum at secondary level in 1988 and the vocationalisation of post-school provision throughout the 1990s (Hyland,1994) - the transferable skills agenda is now a permanent feature of educational discourse in Britain.

Key skills - covering areas such as communication, problem-solving and working with others (Hyland,1999) - are now mandatory features of practice at school and post-school level, and justified as a means of providing for the general transfer of learning which the official curriculum does not supply. As already mentioned the PFC programme makes much of the power of philosophy to stimulate so-called thinking skills. The IAPC (1987) literature informs us that:

> Philosophy is an exceptional thinking skills program because of a number of unusual features. First, it gives children a fresh look at the logic already embedded in the language they use in everyday life. Second, it provides a wealth of exercises and activities based upon those philosophical concepts which children love to talk about, such as friendship, fairness, reality, truth, being a person, and goodness. Third, the program is based on the assumption that discussion skills are the foundation of thinking skills (p.4).

Moreover, the reasoning and thinking skills fostered through the use of IAPC materials are, it is claimed, the 'foundation of learning' (Nicol,1990,p.180).

Although a number of the claims about the educational value of PFC are unexceptionable, the conjunction of these with the rise in recent years of 'skill-talk' (Barrow, 1987) at all levels of educational provision needs to be treated with caution. The vocationalisation of the curriculum at

all levels in recent years has been paralleled by a re-interpretation of the aims and purposes of education in terms of skills of various kinds. However, when faced with lists of so-called 'skills' which include communication, problem-solving and fault-finding alongside life skills, reasoning skills and survival skills (Hyland & Johnson,1998), we are bound to ask whether the same concept of skill is being used in all cases and, indeed, whether the concept has not now become entirely vacuous as a result of being stretched beyond its semantic limits.

A common error in this sphere involves making the invalid move from identifying features common to *different* skills (e.g. thinking or reasoning) and, from this, inferring the existence of a common *skill*. As Dearden (1984) observes in this respect:

> ...there may indeed be features common to all skilled performances in virtue of which we call them skilled, but it does not follow that it is the *same* skill which is present in each case: in the skater, the juggler, the flautist, the chess player and the linguist (p.78; original italics).

In a similar vein, Barrow (1987) regrets the indiscriminate use of skill in that it serves to 'blur the differences' between 'physical, intellectual, perceptual, social, creative and interpersonal operations'(p.188).

In addition to the nebulosity of such skill-talk, there is also the danger of overestimating the degree to which so-called key skills are transferable independently of context. In much of the educational literature in this sphere there is an assumption that - once people have learned to solve problems, find faults or write reports, for example - then these skills can be transferred to all other contexts regardless of subject matter or field. However, apart from the fact that there is little or no empirical evidence to support such notions - with most studies indicating that the development of expertise cannot be separated from context (Halsall & Cockett,1996) - the conception of generally transferable capabilities of any kind seems to be counter-intuitive.

Take problem-solving, for instance. How can solving problems in electrical engineering be remotely connected with solving problems in business studies, meteorology, chess, poetry or philosophy. All such allegedly generalisable skills need to be grounded in fields of specialist

knowledge and experience, and situated within 'communities of practice' (Wenger,2002) which are required to make sense of any form of recognisably human activity. So-called thinking skills are no exception to these conditions. How many kinds of thinking are there? Arguably, at least as many as many as there are forms and fields of knowledge and perhaps - as Wittgenstein (1974) hints at in *Philosophical Investigations* - as many as would be needed to service a 'multiplicity of language-games' (p.11).

Thus, although it is possible to make some sense of 'thinking' , 'discussion' and even 'philosophical' skills, perhaps it would be prudent not to make too many exaggerated or over-ambitious claims about these in the context of philosophy for children programmes. The pursuit of truth, after all, tends to be an irreducibly 'domain-specific activity' (Gardner & Johnson,1996,p.454). Ultimately, it might be enough to settle for stimulating discussion about topics of central intrinsic human interest and contributing to the fostering of a love of philosophy in young people.

Conclusion - Philosophy, Children and the Aims of Education

In seeking an answer to the crucial question concerning 'what are the ingredients of the good life in pursuit of which we undertake to educate people?', Mary Warnock (1977,p.129) constructs a possible answer under the three key headings of 'Virtue, Work and Imagination'. This is an interesting and creative way of investigating the aims of education, and a welcome antidote to the current pre-occupations with economistic and vocational objectives.

Virtue

In answering the famous Socratic question - 'Can virtue be taught?' - in the affirmative, Warnock enters the caveat that 'morality, or virtuousness, should be taught, and can be learned, but not in special lessons' (ibid.,p143). There is a determination here to find a middle way between the 'values clarification' method of moral education - with the teacher adopting a 'neutral' (Hyland,1986) stance in relation to rival versions of goodness - and the idea that teachers can, by example and instruction, somehow make children moral. Although virtue morality has recently

gained ascendancy both in philosophy of education and moral education (Haydon,1999) its expression in Aristotle has been tempered by recent theorising. Thus, it is no longer enough to follow the Aristotelian precept of learning to be good by performing good acts - entering the 'palace of reason...by the courtyard of habit' as Peters (1966,p.314) put it - because example and practice do not take sufficient account of the cognitive-developmental aspects of moral learning identified by Piaget, Kohlberg and others (Duska & Whelan,1977).

Kohlberg's theoretical and philosophical work on the moral development of children stretching over three decades (Kohlberg,1973) resulted in a well-defined series of stages which people passed through in moving from moral ignorance to maturity. There are six principal stages - from pre-conventional, heteronomous morality, through conventional, conformist, to post-conventional, principled and universal morality (Hersh, Miller & Fielding, 1980,pp.124-126) - and an insistence by Kohlberg that moral progress consists in moving from lower to higher stages, since the 'highest stages [universal ethical principles] are most able to handle moral complexity in a stable and consistent way' (ibid.,p.123).

The teacher helps students to move from one stage to the next by presenting them with problems and dilemmas which challenge the key features of the current stage of moral development and - through analysis and reflection - prompt pupils to move on to the next level. A famous example used in most texts in this field is *Heinz's Dilemma* - telling of a man who stole an expensive drug to save his wife's life after the druggist refused to sell him the medicine at a price he could afford (ibid.,pp.122ff) - which challenges pupils at the pre-conventional and conventional stages to weigh and balance different conceptions of honesty, loyalty, property rights and the value of human life. In a similar way the Lipman strategy (clearly influenced by Kohlberg's ideas) uses provocative stories designed to stimulate children's thinking about 'friendship, fairness, truth, reality and moral goodness'(Nicol,1990,p.180). Ethical enquiry, for Lipman (1987), becomes an 'ethical craft' and the students are 'apprentices in that craft' (p.139).

Work

In place of the crude utilitarian and instrumentalist conception of vocational studies which currently characterises educational policy, it is refreshing to come across Warnock's approach to the topic. Jarrett (1991) has argued that perhaps the 'single most important goal for a teacher to work towards has to do with the basic attitude towards work' (p.206), and similar sentiments inspire Warnock's conception that 'work is and always must be an ingredient of the good life' such that a 'life without work would always be less good than a life which contained it' (1977,p.144). By taking the concept of work seriously - exploring its ethical, political and aesthetic aspects - vocational studies can be accorded the value it deserves (and was given in Dewey's philosophy) and preparation for working life can be rescued from its contemporary utilitarian malaise.

Philosophical analysis has much to offer in this upgrading of vocationalism (Hyland,1998). Marking differences between concepts such as 'work' and 'play', 'work', 'labour' and 'toil' - in addition, to an appreciation of the main features of 'autonomous' and 'heteronomous' work (White,1997) - can, for instance, contribute much to an understanding of contemporary perspectives, attitudes and values in relation to work. Similarly, there is clearly much counter-indoctrinatory activity to be undertaken in acquainting pupils with alternatives to the current standard view about so-called 'post-Fordist' economics and the need to direct education towards employability skills to equip individuals to compete in the global market. An examination of the social value of work, of the aesthetic ideals enshrined in pursuing crafts and artisanship, and of the moral principles which underpin working life could provide a valuable antidote to the present impoverished conceptions which currently hold sway. Current moves to stress civic values and citizenship in the UK curriculum for schools (Crick,1998) could learn much from the PFC programme, especially the materials concerned with definitions and fallacies (Lipman,1988,pp.214-216).

Imagination

For Warnock (1977) imagination covers 'a human capacity shared by everyone who can perceive and think, who can notice things and can experience emotions'. It is that 'image-making capacity...by means of which we characterize and feel things to be familiar, unfamiliar, beautiful, desirable, strange, horrible, and so on' (pp.131-132). This aspect of educational development is clearly of the first importance yet - outside the remit of specialist art or literature courses - it receives little attention at either school or post-school levels. Indeed, even in specialist courses imagination and creativity are often stifled in the pursuit of objectified learning outcomes and qualifications. Philosophy is, arguably, a prime vehicle and architectonic focus for stimulating human imagination in all its forms.

Although the PFC programme offers considerable scope for fostering the imaginative faculties in children, its insistence on bespoke materials (linked to specifically accredited teachers, 'trained' in the use of these) could pose a threat to the development of genuine autonomy and creativity in youngsters. Moreover, as Murris (1994) demonstrates, the arguments of the PFC authors against the use of existing children's literature rest on mistaken assumptions. She claims that the Lipman approach is ambiguous about the literal, symbolic and philosophical messages contained in narratives and, consequently, does not sufficiently allow for the important constructivist activity children engage in when interpreting images of all kinds. This also leads to a curious parochialism in the use of materials which overlooks the importance of utilising a wide range of media - advertising, television, drama, cartoons, documentaries and film - to explicate philosophical issues.

It is true that much existing literature - including some recent popular philosophical writing allegedly written for children such as Gaarder's *Sophie's World* (1997) - seems to be *about* children rather than *for* them. Simply including children in philosophy books does not necessarily result in philosophy suitable for children, and it would be a mistake to artificially restrict the range of narrative and visual material available for teaching philosophy. So-called 'philosophical novels' come in many guises, including ones which ostensibly have nothing much

to do with philosophy. Even though Iris Murdoch claimed to be 'opposed in principle to the enterprise of writing philosophic novels' (Herman,2001,p.551) she actually produced some of the finest examples of the form - particularly *The Bell* and *Flight from the Enchanter* written in the 1950s (Levenson, 2001) - published in the last century. If it could be interpreted in ways understandable to the young, such imaginative writing would enrich any philosophy for children programme,

Coda

Socrates was a pedagogue rather than an andragogue. Lipman (1988) is only too aware of this in noting that commentaries on Plato's *Gorgias* - in which Callicles insinuates that philosophy is for children only and not serious enough for grown-ups - seek to refute Callicles by showing that 'philosophy is for adults only, and the older, presumably, the better' (p.3). Thus, although Lipman does indeed demonstrate that philosophy can be done with children of all ages, it has to be said that his methodology, underpinning educational rationale and community of enquiry approaches to teaching philosophy are more open-ended, democratic and wide-ranging than the Socratic programme. Indeed, Socrates would probably not be able to grasp fully Lipman's approach to teaching ethical enquiry informed by the notion of steering between 'authoritarian indoctrination and mindless relativism' (ibid.,p.82). Neither indoctrination nor relativism is allowed for in theories which hold that goodness is a form of objective and demonstrable knowledge.

Schools and colleges have much to gain from the Lipman programme provided that both its objectives and learning materials are interpreted and utilised flexibly, allowing for modification to suit different purposes and contexts. In this respect, a recent conference sponsored by the International Council for Philosophical Inquiry with Children - examining themes of 'citizenship, thinking and philosophy for children' (Winstanley, 2001) - was both positive and optimistic. Not only is the programme still very much alive but - as the 160 delegates from 26 countries demonstrated - it is being creatively and enthusiastically adopted by increasing numbers of educators for a multiplicity of purposes. The large claims about fostering general, transferable

and thinking skills and promoting reasoning which underpins all forms of learning are probably far too ambitious. However, even if we have to temper these with curriculum common-sense, there is still much of value in the PFC programme which can be of inestimable benefit to students of all ages, particularly in this destitute time when education has become synonymous with skills training and preparation for employment. Philosophy is the ideal antidote to the present curriculum impoverishment and instrumentalism and far too important to be omitted from the upbringing and education of any child.

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